

THE COLUMBIAN OBSERVER.

A JOURNAL OF
LITERATURE AND POLITICS.

"THE task of an author is, either to teach what is not known or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them."

Dr. Johnson.

"Citizens by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism."

Washington's Farewell Letter.

VOL. I.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1822.

No. 2.

BYRON'S CAIN.

SINCE the first era of history, which records the primeval songs of inspired Bards, mankind have beheld nothing equal to that stupendous modern, whom we have chosen for the subject of these remarks.—Inspiring even terror, in the bosoms of the timid, by the gigantic grandeur of his genius; he has awakened in the public mind, not only raptures and admiration, of an entirely new and unknown kind; but he has excited such intense emotions, of awe and fear, by the mere potency of his imagination, as have drawn upon him highly unjust imputations mingled with unbounded praise; so as to make the timorous draw back, from the overpowering glare of his productions, as if but to gaze upon them, was to lose forever, the equability of impartial judgment, the purity of virtuous principles.—There is a possibility that genius may be too great for the world; that its creations may startle and amaze those of inferior scope of mind; that its thoughts may rise to subjects, deemed too holy to be touched, or too infinite to be grasped by a mortal mind!—This, however, is a prejudice, only fostered by the timid and superstitious. It is true, *Byron* is that vast, but not that dangerous genius, here described. Who, we might confidently demand shall presume to do sacrilege, to that noblest of all heaven's works, the MIND; and affix limits to its power, or prescribe the boundaries of its flights?—Indefinite in its perfections; endowed with a power of improvement, to which we can see no end; an age, a century, and a thousand ages, are but so many stages in its progressive advancement.—The genius of the epoch of *Homer*, is not equal to the *genius* of the age of Virgil; although *Homer's* epic, may surpass that of the Roman poet. Neither is the *genius* of the age of Virgil, equal to that of the time of Byron. The accumulation of knowledge, science, philosophy; besides that progress in

sentiment and imagination, which naturally goes hand in hand, with it; opens an infinitely wider prospect, to the glowing intellect of a man of genius. The same natural powers which rose to immortality two or three thousand years ago; will, in the present age, far exceed them in the excellence of its creations, owing to the reason just stated. The progress of philosophy, itself, is enough to excite such an *expectation*; much more is it able to confirm the fact. No ancient poet, *could* have written as Byron has done; and if any among his cotemporaries are possessed of a genius, equal to the task, they have not *dared* to indulge in those creations, which it requires as much courage to usher it into existence, as it does ability to form and fashion them from their embryo in the imagination!—But Byron has had the courage to exhibit them, because he perceived nothing in their sublimity, but what the knowledge of the age, contributed to produce, and sanctioned by its perfection and refinement, in philosophy, science, morals and imagination.

Don Juan, *Cain*, and *Childe Harold*, are in a peculiar manner, those offspring of genius, characterised and exalted by the superior views, and enlarged knowledge of his own age, which we have just described. Not even the age of Dryden, of Milton, or of Pope, could have given them birth. As some evidence of what we affirm, let us take the following passage from one of his latest poems, *Cain*, a mystery. It occurs in the scene, where Abel and Cain, offer sacrifice to God; Abel having concluded his prayer kneeling, *Cain* standing erect, thus addresses the Author of all.

Spirit! whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent it may be—and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil,
Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:—

If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with alters,
And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them!
Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes
On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service,
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies:
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the instain'd turf
I spread them on, now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
Good to thee inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours! *If a shrine without victim,*
And alter without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is—*such as thou mad'st him*; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling: if he's evil,
Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st,—
For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt, since all
Rests upon thee; *and good and evil seem*
To have no power themselves, save in thy will;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate; which thus far I have endured.—

We have, throughout the whole of this prayer of Cain, but especially towards the end, a mixture of philosophy, superstition, and metaphysics, exclusively characteristic of the present age; and which Milton could not have used, to depict that obduracy, and pride of heart, which swell to such stupendous magnitude, under the mighty pencil of Byron. The doubt insinuated, that *God can love blood*; that the slaughter and lacerated limbs of an innocent victim, can be a grateful incense, necessary to soften him; are peculiar to the present age of bold and dauntless enquiry. The surmise, that good and evil, have no power but in the will of God, is another stupendous feature of modern illumination. And the inability which Cain professes, *to judge of the actions or attributes of Omnipotence*, particularly in relation to good and evil, being entirely under the control of the divine will; combines a sentiment of such sublime meekness, with such enlarged views, and startling doubts, as stamp it emphatically, as peculiar to the age and genius that produced it.

The result of the sacrifice is in perfect harmony with ancient superstitions. The bloody offering of Abel, is accepted; and the fruits of Cain, are scattered by a whirlwind abroad upon the earth.

As an offset to the impiety of Cain's character, the poet has depicted in the softest, and most winning tints, the amiable benignity, gentleness, piety, and submission of Abel. He here breathes all the religious fervour of a true worshipper of God; he stints nothing that can exalt religion in the eyes of men; and throughout the whole poem, leaves a deep impression of its benign influence.

There is a preceding interview however, between Cain and Abel, even more directly in proof, than that we have cited.

Abel. Where hast thou been?
Cain. I know not.
Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?
Cain. *The dead,*
THE IMMORTAL, the UNBOUNDED, the OMNIPOTENT,
THE OVERPOWERING MYSTERIES OF SPACE—

*The innumerable worlds that were and are—
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loudvoic'd spheres
SINGING IN THUNDER round me, as have made me
UNFIT FOR MORTAL CONVERSE: leave me, Abel.—*

Compared to the sublimity of this passage, the boldest flights of Milton dwindle into insignificance. But we shall let its beauties speak for themselves, while we pass on to a consideration of the knowledge and science, exhibited in this speech of Cain. It cannot be contested, that in this sense, no age but the present, could have furnished the materials for such a poem. The tendency of such a burst of light upon the mind of Cain, is represented by the poet, as precisely similar to the effect of science upon the mind of a philosopher—that tendency is skepticism; thus showing a fact that has always obtained, the incompatibility of vast knowledge in a mind of genius, with a strict performance of religious forms and ceremonies. Thus the progress of Cain's mind to this state is admirably described by the poet, in the scene between Cain and his wife Adah.—

'Tis scarcely
Two hours since ye departed, two long hours
To me, but only hours upon the sun.
Cain. —I have approach'd that sun and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had roll'd o'er my absence.
Adah. Hardly hours.
Cain. The mind, then, hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
I have beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguish'd worlds;
And gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity; *but now I feel*
My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
THAT I WAS NOTHING.
Cain. Say, what have we here?
Adah. Two alters, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer,
A sacrifice to God on thy return.
Cain. And how knew *he* that I would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?
Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.
Cain. One alter may suffice; I have no offering.
Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers and fruits;
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.
Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and sweaten in the sun
According to the curse:—must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing—
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well pleas'd with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.—

It has always been a privilege of poets, to draw characters appropriate to their fable, story, or plot. Milton has pictured, not only Hell, in all its terrible majesty, and sub-

lime horrors, making even the abode of the damned, a region of magnificent gloom, and stupendous qualities; but he has painted even the worst demons who inhabit it, in colours of grandeur, that overtop the ideal figures of the heavenly empire:—so that the Devil has been said to be his hero.—Byron, in exercising an ancient prerogative, has delineated a character in *CAIN*, which in the minds of the timid, weak, or superstitious, may be deemed dangerous. The same objection, we conceive, applies with more force to Milton; but if Byron be thought to have broached sentiments of too bold a cast; the *age*, which furnished him the knowledge, is to blame; and not his genius, which worked upon the materials before him. Shall we censure *Homer* for the Greek mythology, or *Virgil* for that of Rome; if not, how censure Byron for the knowledge of his own times? His gigantic mind, could not touch any subject, with a feeble grasp, or mould it into a decrepid and impotent form. *The foot of Hercules*, will leave its print where he treads. Byron, when he woos the muse, embraces her with lusty and energetic sinews; it is the embrace of Jupiter, when "*Juno smiles*;" all heaven answers to the mighty force, and thunders give response to love's ecstasies.

We shall take occasion, hereafter, to touch upon some of his other recent productions; in the light in which they present themselves to us; after having completed our remarks upon the one now in hand.

A MERCHANT'S WIFE.

LUCY was the youngest of three sisters: she had passed all her life at her father's parsonage, in Cornwall, till her marriage with a young merchant, who was visiting a distant relation, near Mount's Bay; at her father's house he first saw her, and in her father's church she became his wife: he was an orphan, and his only sister had been long married to a clergyman in North Wales. A few weeks after her marriage, Lucy set off with her husband to London; on the morning of her departure, she visited every room in the small parsonage, and sighed over objects, which association had long endeared to her; she had never sighed over them till then. She ran weeping round the garden, and patted the head of her father's old gray horse, as it trotted up, thrusting its neck over the orchard gate at her approach; she wished to have gathered some of the primroses, which spotted with their pale yellow blossoms the bank of her favourite hazel corpse; but she heard her father's voice, and ran quickly back: he told her that her husband was waiting for her. "Oh my dear father," said Lucy, as he pressed her arm to his side, "now I am going to leave you, I am so afraid that I shall not attend as I ought to all your advice, and prove unworthy of the care you have taken to make me good." "My very dear girl," replied the old clergyman, "you have been a dutiful child; I, who never flattered you, declare so; I think God will enable you to be a good wife; you may expect trials, we all must; but while you trust in God, he will never leave you, nor forsake you; remember that, 'God is a God that hideth himself;'* but 'God is love.'†" The two old servants were standing near the door, to see Miss Lucy as long as they could; and she shook hands affectionately with

them both: again and again did she kiss her parents and sisters. At last she took her husband's hand, and said; "dear William, you will love me the better, for being so very sorry; I am quite ready now." She could not speak when she looked from the windows as they drove away; and she tried to smile, but it was one of those smiles which brought tears. They arrived late in the evening at Birch Lane, where Mr. M. resided. The door was opened by a respectable, middle-aged woman, who had lived with him since his arrival in town. Every thing was neat; the house had been freshly painted for her reception, and a fire was blazing in the comfortable parlour. Lucy felt very tired, but she saw that every thing had been prepared for her, with more than common attention: she shook off her fatigue and languor, and sat down, cheerfully, to make tea for her husband. In the presence of Mary, the servant, she admired the neatness and cleanliness of the house. Mary was one of those persons, who possess an excellent heart and a bad temper: she had been out of humour, because her new mistress had delayed her journey for a few days; and because she had waited for her, and the house had been prepared for her reception in vain; but she could not resist the smile with which Lucy, after her long and fatiguing journey, greeted her, and surveyed the apartment which she had arranged. She went down stairs, saying to herself; "well! I think there will be some pleasure in waiting on my young mistress; I feel as if I could not be cross with her." Mary, however, was often cross; but Lucy was always gentle; and to gentleness, she united firmness; so that Mary soon learnt not only to love, but to respect and look up to, her young mistress.—Many months glided away; Lucy was still very happy in her small house, with the few hours she enjoyed of her husband's society. M—— had much good sense; but no one had ever tried to root from his heart that weed, false shame, which impedes the growth of so many virtues; his business was prosperous, and he allowed himself to be a little too much elated by it: he began, too, to feel ashamed of residing in the city. "Lucy," said he, one evening, "I have been thinking, that now I am become richer, there is no occasion for us to remain in this dull house: suppose we were to remove to the other end of the town? I can't bear your being shut up here all day." "But, my dear William, I don't mind being shut up; and I am not dull; the city agrees perfectly well with us: if we were ill, perhaps, it might be better to remove; you have no fatiguing walk now, after a wearisome day; and while the counting house is so near me, I have more of your society: if on my account you wish to go, really, I would rather remain here, always near you." William agreed that it would be much pleasanter to remain near her; and the plan was given up. Lucy passed her mornings in reading and working; she seldom played till the evening, when her husband joined her, as she feared the sound of her piano-forte might disturb those beneath her; she scarcely ever visited, for she had few acquaintances, and only one friend: besides, she was happier in remaining quietly at home, with her husband. Lucy was an attentive observer; and she saw with anxiety, that as the winter approached, there was a sort of assumed cheerfulness in William's manner, which he was, at times, unable to sustain: she could not account for it; nor could she imagine why he was less with her than formerly. One

night, she had, as usual, heard the counting-house shut up, and she knew that all the clerks were gone; but still William remained below: she waited longer for him than she had ever done before; and at length, she hardly knew why, she became uneasy; leaving the parlour door partly open, she softly descended the stairs, and was about to enter the office, when, through a small window in the door, she perceived M—— sitting alone at his desk, leaning his head on his hands, with a countenance which seemed fixed in an expression of utter wretchedness: the desk was closed; no papers were lying on it; the candles had half burnt away, and their dim light, and long crusted wicks, declared that he had long remained in that gloomy position. Lucy said nothing; she returned even more quietly, to her parlour, and when her husband joined her, she was more than usually affectionate in her delicate attentions to him. For some time, his affectionate cheerfulness lasted; he asked his wife to play; but on turning her head, she saw that he was lost in sad reflections, leaning against the chimney-piece. She left the piano, and went up to him: taking his hand, and looking up into his face, with one of those looks of pure tender love which only a wife can bestow, "My dearest William," she said, "I cannot be deceived, you are very unhappy; and to see you thus, renders me so too; will you confide in me? I do not ask from curiosity, but from real affection; I can bear any thing but this dreadful doubt, indeed I can; you will tell me every thing." William had, at first, tried to laugh; but at last he turned mournfully away, and Lucy heard him sob convulsively: she approached nearer to him, and gently threw her arms around his neck: poor William could not restrain his grief any longer; but, leaning his head on her shoulder, he wept aloud: Lucy wept too, but she quietly wiped away her tears; and stifled the choking anguish, that seemed to rise up into her throat; though she was unable to conceal from her husband, how violently she trembled.

(To be continued.)

THE PANACEA, No. 1.

HAVING opened an office, or infirmary, for the effectual cure of all bodily or mental defects, distortions, want of grace, and every other imaginable evil, which hinders maids from being "not vendable," or prevents bachelors from exciting the amorous passion in the breasts of their mistresses; I had no sooner put out my sign over the window; (which by the way, is a very beautiful painting of *Paradise*, before the necessity for a fig leaf existed!) than a billet was thrust under the door, evidently by some bashful patient. Being curious to see who could thus honour me with the first application, I rushed immediately to the window, but could see nobody, but a little negro boy, who ran as fast as his strength would take him, towards a lusty, well-dressed gentleman, who was standing at the corner of the street; who slipping a piece of silver in the hand of the boy, as a reward for his service, smiled additional thanks, and raising his cane over his shoulder, sauntered carelessly away.—I think I should know the gentleman again, by the uncommonly handsome set of teeth he displayed, when he

smiled upon the little negro; though at a considerable distance from my shop; which may be known by the afore-said picture of *Paradise*, underneath which is my *title page*, as some wags familiarly call it; but in plain language, my sign:

THE PHILOSOPHICAL INFIRMARY:

Where ladies and gentlemen, may be speedily cured of every want of charm, that forms an obstruction to matrimony. Domus et placens uxor. Hor. No cure no pay. The most profound secrecy observed, where required.

But to return to the billet from the lusty gentleman. I broke the seal immediately; and read, what may amuse, perhaps edify the reader.

Sir,
I observe by your sign, that you are a man of honour, and a gentleman. Sensibility is a great virtue, in our cases. Delicacy is a humane, or I should rather say, a divine sentiment. I will confide in your secrecy, and open to you without reserve, the most inexpressible of all afflictions. Nature has been bountiful to me in all things, and but too prodigal in one unfortunate particular. I am just turned of forty; have been courting for twenty years; have lost at least ten fortunes, and as many exquisite beauties, destitute of a dollar, besides their wardrobe. Yet my friends tell me I am not absolutely hateful in my features. My teeth are excellent. I read novels, poetry, and religious tracts.—What then would you imagine I am wanting in, to inspire a mutual flame?—I am wanting in nothing; it is redundancy they alone dislike in me; and it is to remove this, I now apply to your universal and infallible art.

I am robust to a fault; the ladies say, to a *deformity*; but then they always exaggerate. And this lies in the very worst part of the system, as it regards personal beauty. My stomach protrudes to an amazing size. I have purchased patent belts, or corsets, of my taylor; and in vain laced them to every possible degree of compression; nature will not yield to art.—Still I cannot see my knee.—My physician has prescribed, abstinence, cathartics, and an occasional emetic; which I cheerfully follow; but I suffer in vain; my bulk rather increases than subsides.—I was the butt of three eating clubs for a month, for refusing either to eat meat, or drink Madeira. But I bore all with patience in hopes of a cure. The cure, however, never came; the fortune I am courting is about to slip through my fingers, into the pocket of a slim and spare dandy, whose ribs I can count through his waistcoat.

You cannot imagine my rotundity; and it shows the more, because in other parts of my body, I am rather slim. My legs for instance, are a match for my rivals; and only serve to add to my deformity in *that place*!—When I enter a room, the young girls begin to titter in their handkerchiefs; snigger on one side; nod, wink, or cough, with significant and provoking meaning.—I have sometimes overheard them wonder, if Dr. D——s could not relieve me.—In fine, sir, this protrusion has been the bane of my life. It has made me a batchelor against my inclination; and renders me an object of ridicule, without my consent, I assure you.—I am plunged in despondency; I wish a cure; you profess the power, and your reward shall be ample.—In truth, I love the lady I am now courting; but never approach her, that she does not salute me with a *smile* of that

description, which I know to be directed at my—rotundity. This always puts cupid to flight.—As to the men, their wit is without bounds; and alluding to my many courtships, so ardent and so fruitless, they now give out, that I have been too long in the family way, to delay matrimony any longer.—The boy will call for your prescription, to-morrow at 8; he will answer no questions.

Yours,

A SUFFERING DANDY.

The gentleman, a suffering dandy, is hereby informed that he is under consideration. His case is a very extraordinary one. I have called a consultation; and will prescribe his cure next week; though I fear the graces in this instance, must yield to the philosophers.

Double Entendre.

Copy of a letter written by Cardinal Richelieu to the French ambassador, at Rome.

a Fear of the order of Saint Benedict, as his passport to your protection, discreet, the wisest, and the least or have had the pleasure to converse with. to write to you in his favour, and together with a letter of credence; his real merit, rather I must say, than to his modesty is only exceeded by his worth. wanting in serving him on account of being I should be afflicted if you were misled on that score, who now esteem him, wherefore, and from no other motive that you are most particularly desired, to shew him all the respect imaginable, that may either offend or displease him no man I love so much as Mr. Compigne, neglected, as no one can be more worthy to be base, therefore, would it be to injure him. are made sensible of his virtues, and you will love him as I do; and then The assurance I entertain of your urging this matter to you further, or Believe me, Sir, &c. RICHELIEU.

Sir,—Mons. Compigne, a Savoyard by birth, is the man who will present to you this letter. He is one of the most meddling persons that I have ever known. He has long earnestly solicited me to give him a suitable character, which I have accordingly granted to his importunity; for believe me, Sir, I should be sorry that you should be misinformed of his real character; as some other gentleman have been, and those among the best of my friends: I think it my duty to advertise you to have special attention to all he does, nor venture to say any thing before him, in any sort; for I may truly say, there is none whom I should more regret to see received and trusted in decent society. And I well know, that as soon as you shall become acquainted with him you will thank me for this my advice. Courtesy obliges me to desist from saying any thing more upon this subject.

First read the letter across, then double it in the middle, and read the first column.

POLITICAL.

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

AT no period, since the formation of the Federal Government, have the domestic politics, and national economy of this country, wore so desponding and gloomy an aspect,

as they do at present. Yet complaint and lamentation, are almost wholly precluded, by the enjoyment of those natural felicities, so bountifully lavished upon our clime, by a beneficent providence. As human creatures, depending upon the unbounded goodness of the author of all things; we not only have no cause to complain, but it would amount to unpardonable ingratitude, and wicked impiety to vent a murmur. The God of nature has showered blessings upon us, as a people, beyond what the other portions of the globe, in general enjoy. As members of the *human family*, we feel profoundly grateful for these blessings: but we give all the honour, and all the glory of such enjoyments, to whom it is alone due, to God; for this is a religious duty; a duty as sacred, as the feelings which it inspires are exquisite. But here it ends. To man, no thanks are due, for these transcendent benefits, which are exclusively, the works of an Almighty hand.

As members of a *political family*, we have other and important duties to perform. As American citizens, we are called upon to be vigilant guardians of our liberties and our rights. To watch the motions of the servants of the people; to enquire into abuses of office; to mark the usurpations of power; to expose corruptions, and to trace the consolidation of authorities, constitutionally distinct, and destructive to freedom; is the duty of every citizen, in a republic, where all are equal.

In looking around us, at the present moment, for subjects of congratulation, and of benefit, to the country, we can observe nothing calculated to produce exultation, or even rescue us from sensations of shame and mortification. As the heirs of revolutionary freedom, and constitutional republicanism; we can find nothing to excite the faintest glow of pride or throb of patriotism; but perceive abundance of vices and corruptions, to induce lamentation, and excite the most solemn fears, in regard to the future welfare of the republic.

The operations, as well as the abuses of every free government, are to be chiefly observed in the actions of the Legislative body. We are to look to Congress, therefore, to behold the progress of political wisdom, and to note the improvements made in national economy, as well as in the whole art of procuring happiness for a free people. To Congress and the executive, is delegated the task of advancing us in the road to prosperity; developing our resources; protecting our industry, and securing us both from want and oppression; both from foreign competition, and domestic factions. The blessings of freedom, depend in a great measure, upon the security of property, and the cherishing of industry, with a maternal and solicitous care. We might still be free, in a state of utter penury; but to enjoy rational freedom, it is not only necessary that commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, should be protected, but that our constitution should be preserved inviolate, and our laws enacted in a spirit of sagacity, experience, and foresight.

In vain will our heroes have achieved our separation from Great Britain; in vain will our statesman have digested a code of organic laws, for our happiness and freedom, if our statesmen prove incompetent, and our Representatives passive, or corrupt. The machine, the *skeleton* of government, will indeed remain; but it will be, as it now is, lifeless, motionless, without a soul to animate, or a head to direct it, to noble and salutary ends.

We appeal to the recent, and still existing conduct of the national legislature, in proof of this position, as well as to the message of the President, at the opening of the first session of the Congress. Notwithstanding more than three months have elapsed, since the meeting of Congress, no one law of a truly national and important character, has yet been passed by that body.—Have they then been idle? Far from it. They have been busily engaged, but not upon the constitutional business, for which they were elected to the Legislature.—They have been engaged in canvassing for a presidential election, three years distant. Every member of the cabinet is a candidate for the ensuing Presidency. The *secretaries*, at the head of their departments, are in the situation of the Roman generals, at the head of their armies, when a consul, a dictator, or an emperor, was to be chosen. The strife is between *Cæsar*, and *Pompey*; between one secretary and the other; and while the commonwealth is rent and torn by their several factions, at the instance of personal ambition, the interests of the country, are trodden under foot, in the lecherous conflict. No *Cato* can now be found, to breast the torrent of corruption, and restore the republic to the pristine vigour of revolutionary virtue.

When,
Liberty, lies panting in ambition's gripe,
All stand aghast, with horror at the deed;
But none have courage to assail the monster.—

Congress, instead of being, what the people ordained it, an assembly of statesmen, has unhappily degenerated into a club of demagogues, eager to volunteer under the banners of a successful chief, who aspires to the Presidency, and may have power to reward their services, by the gift of a pension, an office, or an embassy. In this manner, the four secretaries of the cabinet, have their four parties on the floor of Congress. Every motion, or resolution, is made, or opposed, from ulterior considerations and motives, relating to the grand game, of which they are in pursuit. Hence every motion excites to debate and declamation; for it is scarcely possible for any measure, not to have a bearing upon some one of the four departments of the government; either upon the treasury, or the war office; the secretary of state, or the secretary of the Navy. In this way, few measures survive the conflict of a cross fire, from the different factions; for as three parties, always stand prepared, to crush the suggestions of one, who may venture to exalt its idol; defeat is always certain, if the measure be salutary; and success only possible, when it would bring down odium upon its projectors, by its pernicious influence and operation.

With a Congress, thus unconstitutionally organised, to promote exclusively, the personal interest, cupidity, and ambition of its members, where can the people look for assistance, to extricate them from their embarrassments, to encourage their enterprise, and develop their industry and resources?—Under such corruptions, the government becomes substantially extinct; we possess indeed, the frame and the theory; but the spirit has transmigrated from the body politic, to inhabit the bosoms of infuriated caballers only eager for the destruction of one another, and utterly indifferent, if not callous, to the misery of the people.—In such a stage of depraved aberration, from republican puri-

ty, the people can only expect protection, from a spirited and thorough reform; but this reform is destined never to happen, till the evil arrives at a head; till corruption shall swell to an unwieldy monster, and then bursting by the force of its own venom, give the people relief, by cutting asunder, the bonds of the present system. History presents us with no example of a *voluntary* reform in government; and we are not so infatuated by self-love, as to believe, that we shall be the first among nations, to set an example of philosophical virtue in government.

To give an idea of the corruptions at the seat of the national legislature, by comparing them to the Augean stable, is not possible; for to correct them, would not only defy the strength and labour of a Hercules; but resist the united power of the greatest patriots, either of Rome, or our own country. To detail the numerous facts, illustrative of this position, will form an interesting part of our future discussions.

Mr. King, of New York, has offered as an apology for Congress, that they have *done nothing* this session, that there was *nothing to do*! "That the President, at the opening of Congress, had presented *very little* business for their consideration." Is this an attempt to shuffle off censure from Congress, upon the executive? Or shall it be considered, as an open avowal of treachery to the people; a criminal waste of their money, and a satire upon their form of government? Mr. King made this observation, when Congress had been in session three months. If there was *nothing to do*, at the opening of the session, why not at once adjourn; save the people the mortification of disappointed relief, and the agony of suspense, protracted till the last moment, into hope and expectation?—But that Congress had business to do; business of an important and national character, is demonstrated by the disappointment and complaints of the people. If the President, either from imbecility, or ignorance, or contracted notions of state policy, did not adjudge it proper, to recommend the public interest to their attention; is it either a proof, that the people had no interests to promote, or no desire to see their condition improved by legislative wisdom? Did the omission of the President, exonerate the Congress from the discharge of their sacred duties, their special trust? These are questions, which every man, who sat in the first session of the seventeenth Congress, should put to himself, in the privacy of his closet, and answer according to his conscience, on the honour of a man. If not, what shall exculpate Congress from the waste of the public money, and the culpable neglect of the people's interest. Will their cupidity, their ambition, or their want of public virtue, prove a satisfactory apology, for such a wanton perversion of their public trust?—No; the people will not listen to the profanation.

The state of the nation, is *prima facie* evidence, that Congress had vast and complicated business to transact, if faithful to the country, their constituents, and the constitution. From every commercial part of the union, petitions for a bankrupt law, have been transmitted to the tables of Congress. The infantile progress of manufactures, tender, interesting, but vigorous; should have excited an interest in the government, proportioned to the boldness of their enterprise, and the rapidity of their success. This should more especially have been the policy of a patriotic Congress, at a time, when universal embarrassment and penur-

ry, spread like contagion over the country; when a redundant population, deprived of profitable employment in the pursuits of agriculture and commerce, stood famishing in indolence; when the explosion of the paper system had caused a re-action, fraught with poverty and distress; when unoccupied capital could find no source of investment; and when hourly impoverishment, to liquidate foreign debts, demonstrated the folly of dependence upon foreign manufactures, at the sacrifice of comfort and of competency.

We might naturally infer, from Congress being at a loss for business, that our roads were all turnpiked; that our country, from extreme north and south, to extreme east and west, was thickly intersected by commodious canals; that no river was in want of a bridge, no stream impeded by an obstruction: that every department of government was free from corruption; that the Post Office was without suspicion of peculation; that the treasury was in no confusion; the Navy free from defects; and the department of war, uncontaminated by sinister perversion; or ambitious jobs: that our commerce was unfettered by foreign countries, and our soil itself on the north-west coast, not in a state of actual invasion, by the most ambitious and gigantic power of Europe!—Yet it is in the midst of such arduous and stupendous undertakings, that an American Congress, can find no business to engage their attention;—no business but *electioneering*, for an office, which may have no existence, at the expiration of the incumbent's term.

It may, perhaps, startle the timid, as well as grieve the patriotic, that we should hint at the extinction of the Presidential chair, within so brief a period as three years. But great changes are not always tedious in their occurrence; when the dissolution, instead of the formation of government, produces the change. We look to this event, not because it is desirable, but because it is the natural catastrophe of an accumulation of abuses, subversive of the first principles of the confederacy. If those abuses are not corrected; if usurpations are permitted to multiply; and venality to spread wider and wider, its baneful influence; it appears utterly repugnant to reason, history, and the natural tendency of the human passions, to expect a different, or happier result. The system must and will cause its own explosion. As an example of this gross perversion, let us take the following contradictions. In the face of the constitution, a Bankrupt Law is declared by Congress to be illegal. Congress have no authority, Mr. Monroe thinks, to construct roads and canals; although they have power to establish post offices, and post roads, and provide for the general welfare. While on many subjects, where the constitution gives them no power, they exercise it freely, and without scruple, to the great detriment of the public weal. In the midst of these anomalies in legislation, Congress proclaim to the country, *they have nothing to do, and have done nothing*. At the same time, an organised and permanent majority, resist the voices and petitions of the most powerful section of the Union, to grant a partial protection to the manufacturing industry of the nation.—Thus the *usefulness* of Congress, is exclusively confined to the fiscal operations of government, in authorising loans, and making appropriations, to pay the salaries of its officers; and subsidise a legion of minions, in the form of contractors, stockjobbers and agents.

In this situation of affairs, a Congress becomes a burden to the people, without yielding the slightest, not to say an adequate return, for the expense, to which they subject the nation. It has now become a habit with the people, to look to their deliberations, with perfect indifference; to expect nothing from them, either wise or beneficial; and the opinion is not singular, or confined to a few, that they might as well remain at home. The impression of the inefficiency of Congress, is the first step towards its extinction. The people will next complain, that it is a useless burden; and refuse to pay for *orations* instead of *laws*; or to have an Electoral College constantly in session, to choose an impotent President, once in a period of eight years, the practical term of his service, in violation of the constitutional period of election, which restricts it to four.

Subordinate to these corruptions, and instrumental in their creation, are the several *state factions*, who impede, or infect with poisonous qualities, the measures of the national legislature, and the official conduct of the President. The factions of the most powerful states, however, are alone conspicuous, or formidable in Congress. Those of New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina, appear pre-eminently distinguished for their arrogance, their virulence, and their ambition; always prompt to interfere in executive appointments, within their several states; always vigilant in the motions of their opponents, and impelled by implacable resentment, to denounce, proscribe, and trample on those, whom they suspect not to favour their ambition, or whom they know to differ from them in principles; while they are equally overbearing and imperious, in imposing their own creatures and tools, upon the fears, the credulity, or the impotence of the executive:—in direct subversion, of all constitutional right, uncorrupted freedom, and executive responsibility.

It must prove a source of deep vexation and chagrin, if not of shame, to the old friends and supporters of Rufus King, to find him leagued with the New-York faction, in Congress for such purposes; a cabal without principle and without restraint; having in view no national or public object; but solely constituted of personal ambition, and unmeaning resentments. Concealing under the disguise of Republicanism, unmitigated rancour of animosity, as well as unhallowed and pernicious projects of ambition; it is a matter of some wonder, that guilty of the extremities, to which their passions have hurried them, the people should have so long borne with their imperious and vindictive spirit. It has generally been supposed, since his demonstrations of patriotism, during the late war, that Mr. King had returned from his early aberrations, to constitutional principles of Republican virtue. Giving him full credit for the sincerity of his reformation; how could he reconcile his *interference* in a national appointment, with the provisions of the constitution, and a full knowledge of his own duty? As a statesman, Mr. King must always rank high; but as the tool of a desperate faction, he is not merely lowered in public estimation; but even his talents suffer by his indiscretion. He who leagues with a cabal, is no longer a statesman, but a demagogue. Such conduct from men of an inferior stamp, excites no surprise. We expect it from Van Beuren; we overlook it in Tompkins; but a free people will never forget the transgressions of Mr. King.—

DEAF AND DUMB.

Among the subjects that have engrossed Legislative attention at Harrisburgh, an enquiry into the state of the institution of the Deaf and Dumb, has excited considerable attention. The founder and first principal of this benevolent asylum, had been expelled by the Managers, under a charge of misconduct; which while it does not appear to have been proved, was not only fatal to his reputation by the enormity of the imputed crime, but of a character, calculated to blast his prospects forever. The high nature of the charge, the ruinous consequences to the individual and his family if innocent, and the imposing form of the accusation, supported by respectable men; induced a legislative enquiry into his alleged misconduct. The committee, to whom this duty was confided, acting on a mass of evidence, furnished by the Managers of the Institution themselves, have reported a full acquittal of the late Principal; and have not hesitated to pass severe censure upon the act of his wanton expulsion: the Managers not only having failed in their proof, but the nature of the testimony itself, being extremely frivolous, fanciful and visionary, the whole proof resting upon the baseless fabric of a *dream*.—To what motives, to ascribe his dismissal, the imagination is at a loss to conjecture, without doing violence to the best feelings of the human heart. It cannot be possible that private malice, mortified pride, political intolerance, or religious bigotry could have influenced the respectable gentlemen, who voted for his expulsion, and yet, to what else shall we ascribe it? They are generally believed, to be persons above such base and degrading passions. But their representation of the conduct of the late Principal, is so immediately at variance with the report of the Legislature, as to pose the judgment in deciding upon the veracity of the parties. A violation of truth and of justice rests either upon the Managers, or upon the Legislature; and the mind is rather inclined to repose its faith, in the impartiality and enlightened justice of the Legislature (for what motives could they have to pervert facts?) than in the Managers, whose passions appear to have been under a strong excitement against the *Principal*, while thinking and acting upon the subject.—However this may be, the managers owe to themselves and their constituents a justification of their proceedings, in relation to Mr. Seixas: or, if this is not deemed expedient, it certainly becomes the duty of the contributors, to question the policy of re-electing those who voted for his expulsion, to the same station, at the ensuing term. A solemn act of the Legislature, has declared him not only innocent, but *injured* and *oppressed*; and that declaration is made from a mass of evidence, which the enemies of Mr. Seixas, pronounced *too indelicate to meet the public eye*; which evidence came from the managers themselves.—If ever there was an oppressed man, that man is Mr. Seixas; and never let a community of freemen, be taunted with the degrading boast, that a combination of *Aristocrats*, was able, in this country of liberty, to proscribe and put down a worthy citizen, because he is a Republican; and not endowed with wealth, rank or title.

TO POETICAL CORRESPONDENTS.

We invite poetical communications from correspondents; but implore them not to disgust us by mediocrity.—*Rhyme*

is always pleasing, when it appears in the graceful character of *drapery*, to the divine figure of Poesy herself. The garment, the mere gilded trappings, would yield neither utility, nor pleasure to the public, nor to us.

Machiavel, though the Tutor of tyrants, yet sometimes spoke a language becoming a freeman.—“To attempt, says he, to make a people free, who are servile in their nature, is as hopeless as to strive to reduce to slavery, a nation imbued with the spirit of freedom.”

Your President, said an Observer, only differs from a King, in the folly of his measures. He devotes the first four years of his power, to secure a *re-election*; and the last four, to choosing a *successor*! What time has he for the public service?—Will the people endure such a stigma?

SELECT POETRY.

MY OWN SENTIMENTS.

From “*May you like it.*”

Though all the world should bid me tear
Thy long-lov'd image from my heart;
Though every voice should whisper near,
That thou and I must ever part;
Fear not; my love can ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

Though guilt should stamp upon thy brow
Her mark, to part thee from mankind;
Though every one who loves thee now
Should turn away, and prove unkind;
Fear not; my love can ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

He who would never share thy sin,
Would share the shame, that sin attending,
And feel a fount of joy within,
The world's most valued praise transcending;
Fear not; my love can ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

Let faultless hands presume to cast
The stone which first should lay thee low,
My hand should be the very last,
Ah! it should never strike the blow.
Fear not; my love can ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

As one who on the ocean's shore
The shipwreck'd seaman strives to save,
And, 'mid the tempest's wildest roar,
Still holds his beacon o'er the wave;
Thus shall my true love ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

Thus on destruction's wave-worn brink,
Though guilt and death should round me lower,
My foot alone should never shrink,
My beacon's God's all-saving power.
Fear not; my love can ne'er decline,
My soul still hopes, and prays for thine.

CONDITIONS.

I. To be published every Saturday morning, in eight quarto pages. Three dollars per annum, payable six months after subscribing, or 12 1-2 cents single numbers.

II. Subscriptions out of the city must be paid in advance.

III. Communications addressed to the Editors through the Post Office, must be post paid.

Should sufficient encouragement offer, the editors reserve the right to give a more extended form to the *Columbian Observer*, in which case a proportionate increase of price will be made.

Subscriptions and Communications received by HICKMAN & HAZARD, No. 121, Chesnut-Street.